



The Freewinds treats islanders to an evening with Jazz icon Jon Novello

This past weekend the Freewinds cruise ship, which has been visiting Aruba for over eighteen years, hosted a musician's convention. On board the ship were some of the great names in jazz and contemporary music, perhaps not that well known outside the industry, but considered by many better-known superstars as the standard to meet in their own performances.

Such is Jon Novello, the grand maestro of the keyboard; performer, composer and arranger, his work with the trio Niacin encompasses a vast array of musical disciplines, including progressive, jazz, rock, fusion, and funk. Music magazines describe him as "a man who knows his way around a keyboard."

Jon Novello proved this on Saturday night with an incredible performance, as the Freewinds' Port Captain Ludwig Alpers along with Jani Croes of Aruba, host of the "Just Jazzy" radio program welcomed islanders for a free concert. Entertaining the audience along with Jon Novello was dynamic singer Carmel Helene, Jazz saxophonist Scott Katzev and Justin Meldal-Johnsen, bass player for the group "Beck." Blues and Jazz singer Izzy Chait was cajoled from the audience to join Carmel and the group in some stirring duets of great standards that pleased all ages of the audience. Though classic songs that have been around for decades, their unique and electric interpretation made it fresh and exciting. This fantastic combination could possibly inspire an electrifying CD, as the singers and performers melded flawlessly with the Freewinds band. It was the sort of fantastic evening that music lovers would pay a hefty price to enjoy, but the Freewinds was happy to share this experience with native islanders, in what Jon Novello described as "one of my favorite parts of the world."